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REMARKS

Claims 7-12 are pending and the Examiner has objected to Claim 7. Applicant has amended the claim to overcome the objection.

Claims 7-12 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 (b) as being anticipated by Rumpf (USPN 3,833,781). Applicant traverses the rejection as follows.

In reviewing Rumpf, the parts in the specification / drawing, provided with the reference symbols 42 and 38 are not electrical contact parts and, instead, are strictly mechanical components of the "buckle" for securing the locking. This means that part 38 is a leaf spring, which brings about the locking of the belt tab in the belt lock (or buckle), whereas part 42 is a wedge-shaped, bent piece of sheet metal for producing a vertical force for the movement of an arms 39 (strip spring part), which then finally initiates the actuation of an electrical switch contact.

Furthermore, regarding elements 12, 19, 36, 44, 16 and 39, Applicant asserts the following: element 12 is not the switch housing, but the "buckle" housing; element No. 19 is not a protective wall in the switch housing but a housing part of the "buckle"; element 36 is not a protective wall of the switch housing but the locking part of the "buckle"; element 44 is not a guiding channel but the locking opening in the belt tab; element 16 is not a slide but the belt tab; element 39 is not a contact but a strip spring part (arm) in the "buckle" for actuating a switch contact in the switch housing. Element 42 (which is referred to as a sensor) has a triangular shape. This

shape differs from the shape of a hammer and is dissimilar with the shape of the contact spring described in the pending application.

In contrast to the application of Rumpf, in which an electrical contact system is triggered by a complicated system of levers, the slide of the present invention is disposed parallel to the insertion opening / channel for the belt tab and accordingly is located in the lower end of the insertion opening / channel for the belt tab.

When the belt tab is inserted, the slide 4 is moved downward and comes into contact with the region 9 of the contact spring 7 protruding into the channel 3 of the switch. By these means, the two contact springs 7 and 6, depending on their position (closing or opening) are separated or combined and, accordingly, emit a switching signal, which is then displayed to indicate whether the belt system is locked properly.

Accordingly, the invention is not anticipated by the Rumpf.

Furthermore, the Examiner states that in Rumpf a frame 30 and 29 is provided that anticipates the frame 1 in the pending application. In Rumpf, the frame, together with the frame 29, functions as a stop for locking the switch and "buckle" together. In the case of pending application, the frame 11 forms a connecting space 5 for the connecting leads 10.

Further, regarding Claim 7, the "slider" is not part of the switch (actuator), but is a part of the belt buckle.

Moreover, Rumpf illustrates in Figs. 11-13 and discloses at column 4, ll. 11 et seq., a latch 36 that is adapted for being biased downwardly by movement

of a slide 16 in an open ended channel 44. Other than the movable latch 36, there is no structure between a first contact member 42 and a second contact member 38. Moreover, the latch 36 is required to be movable so that the contact members can contact each other.

The structure of Rumpf is inapposite with structure of the present invention which is illustrated in the figure and disclosed on pages 4-6. According to the invention, non-movable walls define a space 2a and a channel 3, where a second contact member 7 has a projection 9 which extends between blades of a first contact member 6 into the channel 3. Moreover, the first contact member 6 does not extend into the channel 3.

Applicant further asserts that in Rumf, the switching contacts with the connecting cable are in a separate switch housing (21), which is connected mechanically with the buckle (11) by locking it on. The switch housing, at the same time, serves as a basic fastening for the buckle in the vehicle. For this purpose, there is a slot (20) in the housing for accommodating the lower belt webbing. The switching function is realized owing to the fact that a springy contacting metal sheet (32), which is mounted rigidly with its first end together with the first cable connection in the switch housing and mounted elastically with its second, springy end engages between or is disengaged from the tabs of a springy, fork-shaped contacting metal sheet (33), rigidly mounted in the housing. The fork-shaped contacting metal sheet is connected with the second cable connection. The actuation of the springy

contacting metal sheet, required for the switching, is realized over an actuator arm (39), which is fastened at the buckle and the fork-shaped end (40/41) of which, after the buckle and switch housing are locked together, takes hold of the springy contacting metal sheet. The perpendicular movement of the actuator arm is produced by the belt tab in conjunction with the locking part of the belt latch (36) and a wedge-shaped sheet-metal part (sensor (42)).

The configuration of Rumf provides various disadvantages. For example, during a crash, the tensile force on the belt must be absorbed by the switch housing. It is problematic to position the fork-shaped end of the springy metal sheet in the buckle and the springy contacting metal sheet in the switch housing when locking the buckle and switch housing together. Actuating the contact occurs indirectly over the springy element (springy metal sheet), which limits the switching reliability.

Based on the differences between the invention and the cited art, Applicant has amended claims 7-12 to further clarify the invention. As non-movable separations between the first and second contact members are not disclosed in Rumpf, and would hinder the operation of Rumpf by preventing contact between the contact members, the claims as amended overcome the rejection over Rumpf. *Verdegaal Bros. v. Union Oil Co. of California*, 814 F.2d 628, 631, 2 U.S.P.Q.2d 1051 (Fed. Cir. 1987) ("a claim is anticipated only if each and every element as set forth in the claim" is found in the cited prior art reference). Applicant further

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provides new claims 13-17 which further clarify the scope of the invention and distinguish over Rumf.

A two month extension of time is requested. The fee of 455.00 for the extension is provided for in the credit card fee payment form, attached herewith. The USPTO is hereby authorized to charge any fee(s) or fee(s) deficiency or credit any excess payment to Deposit Account No. 10-1250.

In light of the foregoing, the application is now believed to be in proper form for allowance of all claims and notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,
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